



The State of New Hampshire  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

January 15, 2008

The Honorable Jim Ryan, Chairman  
N.H. House of Representatives  
Transportation Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 203  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

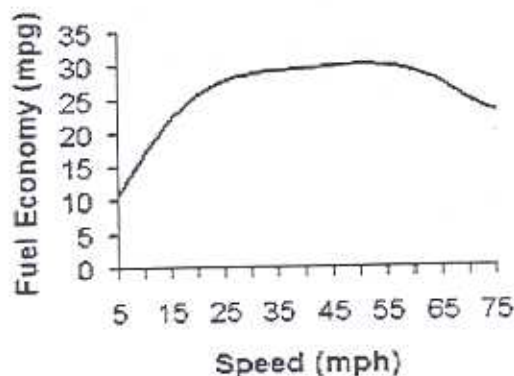
**Re: House Bill 1524 relative to speed limits and keeping right except to pass**

Dear Chairman Ryan and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on behalf of the Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) regarding HB 1524 relative to speed limits and keeping right except to pass. The Department of Environmental Services opposes the portion of this bill that increases the speed limit from 65 to 70 miles per hour (mph) on the interstate system, the central New Hampshire turnpike, and the eastern New Hampshire turnpike in locations where said highways are 4-lane divided highways, or other divided highways of 4 or more lanes.

Motor vehicles are the major source of air pollutants that cause elevated levels of ground level ozone in New Hampshire, contributing over half of the nitrogen oxide (NOx) and volatile organic compound pollutants that form ozone pollution. Ground level ozone is a respiratory irritant that can pose significant health hazards to sensitive populations, including children, the elderly, and those with respiratory conditions such as asthma. Emissions of NOx increase as speeds rise. Higher speed limits will contribute to elevated levels of NOx and ground level ozone and smog in the summer months.

Motor vehicles also account for about one third of New Hampshire's carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, a greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. Emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> are directly related to the fuel economy of a motor vehicle and equate to approximately 20 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> per gallon of gasoline or diesel burned<sup>1</sup>. When speed is increased from 65 mph to 70 mph fuel economy decreases by about 8% based on data from the U.S. Department of Energy<sup>2</sup> and illustrated in the chart below<sup>3</sup>.



1 <http://epa.gov/otaq/climate/420f05001.htm#calculating> - CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are 19.4 lbs/gallon for gasoline, and 22.2 lbs/gallon for diesel fuel.

2 Transportation Energy Data Book: Edition 26-2007 - Table 4.22, Fuel Economy by Speed, 1973, 1984, and 1997 Studies.

3 Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy - <http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/driveHabits.shtml>  
DES Web site: [www.des.nh.gov](http://www.des.nh.gov)

Governor Lynch, recognizing the harmful impact climate change will have on New Hampshire's environment and economy, has recently established the Climate Change Task Force that will establish goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the state and develop a plan for achieving those goals. Raising the speed limits in New Hampshire at this time will only make this effort more difficult. DES encourages the legislature to maintain the current speed limits in the state.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on HB 1524. Please call me at 271-3503 or Rebecca Ohler, Supervisor of the Mobile Source Section, at 271-6749 if you have any questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas S. Burack". The signature is written in a cursive style. A large, red, diagonal stamp with the word "COPY" is overlaid on the signature.

Thomas S. Burack  
Commissioner

cc: HB 1524 sponsors